

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, May 3, 1917, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Thursday, May 3, 1917. Darling Alec:

Please, please get something more to eat than all those starchy things, crackers and oatmeal. I am going to telegraph Kathleen tonight to ask her to offer to board you so you won't feel that you are "sponging." I asked the doctor and he said you must have green vegetables, the canned ones are all right and Kathleen says you have a supply.

I am trying to get finished up here to start North, but am not quite ready. I would be nearer ready if I hadn't spent so much time learning about canning and trotting around after the foreigners. Not that I did anything in that way after the first, but a lot of time went in reading and talking over the things they told. Everybody but us, we haven't called, went to the Eustis' last night to see Joffre, but he didn't turn up, was too busy with Senators at Henry White's. Viviani came, and the other Frenchman and Daisy said they all and especially Viviani had beautiful faces and were somehow very pathetic. Viviani I know has lost his son. Bobbie volunteered for the Officers Reserve and has been rejected on account of his hearing.

You know I spoke to you last fall about having Rose plough more ground. It did not seem particularly important then, but judging from all I hear and read it is a prime necessity, what use was Midas' money to him without bread, and we must have food. Of course the trouble is labor, and that is what I want you and Casey 2 and Kathleen to talk over right away. I have no definite plan, but every one here is organizing the children, giving land and letting them have the proceeds. I thought we would either sell them the fertilizer, or better prepare the land for them and go shares with the produce as they can't do the heavy work of preparation and we would have to pay for it, in other words give them the food, which

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is not necessary. But by giving shares they get the food and we get some return for our outlay in labor and fertilizer. And this we can either sell or give away to others who couldn't get it. For the idea isn't to pauperize the Baddeckers, but to produce more food with which to feed the soldiers and factory and other workers. They want a rotary plough invented to cost no more than a motorcycle, and to go 2 miles an hour. The present plough can't make more than 1 mile which puts a limit on what farmers can produce, and they want it rotary because the present form firms the soil beneath it, and also obliges the work to be smoothed with the harrow. A rotary plough wouldn't firm the earth and would do away with the harrow.

The two inventions now needed are, 1. means of overcoming submarines, 2. labor saving means of increasing productivity.

Don't kill any lambs, it is just criminal, keep them alive until I can show the people how to can them if it doesn't pay to feed them. Just think of the thousands of tons of food just being dumped into the sea!

Please take vegetables, I can't spare you, and I do want to finish up here before I go North for 9 months.

Your loving, Mabel.

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P.S. Show the enclosed to Casey. Mr. McCurdy dines here tomorrow, I think he wants me to invest some money in a new invention he is trying to patent, that is what he is here for. I am afraid he thinks me mean not to have him stay with me or to offer him a dark room, but I can't do it as there are too many other things going on, and I can't be bothered to entertain him or anybody else. I wrote to Mr. and Mrs. John Morrison. It's terrible and pathetic, and yet there was no hope for the little fellow I suppose.